Notes from Maidstone CAN Chat Monday 16th March 2026 Lockmeadow Foyer
Informal start 19.00 with items for discussion from 19.30

Attending…
Bernie Cumberland, David Harman, Chin Waterfall, Sally Edwards, Duncan Edwards, Glyn Williams, Neil Nixon, Vincent Jasper, James Ferrier, Lauren Sykes, Jeff Robinson. Tomas Thorndycraft

Apologies…
Chris Passmore, Maria Paez, Coby Gardiner, Geraldine Lawrence, Lynn Bryant, Angela Sinclair, Cas Holmes

Some new faces James and Tomas, many thanks for joining us.

We managed to secure a spot in the foyer at the front right (as you walk in) which felt rather more intimate and comfortable and allowed conversation to flow freely and without previous issues where it has been difficult to hear. With a dozen attendees this did max out the space so if more people come along we will need to rethink use of the space a little but a thumbs up so far.

Duncan explained we were trying a slightly new format with some priority topics heading up the discussions and limited to 20 minutes each and essentially a round table discussion with one person taking the lead. This seemed to work well and we managed to keep on time.

The 3 priority chats were to cover the Repair Cafe, Zone Themes and The Emergency Briefing.

Repair Cafe

We looked at marketing/advertising the repair Cafe principally on Social Media and we looked at some of the top performing FB posts. Indeed one post by Sally achieved well over 8k views which is brilliant. A number of others also achieved good viewing figures well over 1k views which given our following must be considered good. Hopefully we can drive this up and some discussion was had on tagging, which to many of us seems like a black art. So we need to get a bit better at this and learn some of the nuances that will help our reach.

What would be very helpful if our existing volunteer base engaged more this would help enormously. If everyone can like, share and comment on some of these posts then our message will travel further afield. Even if you can't comment then at least like as this is quick and painless.

Discussion around Tik Tok which we do not currently use, has a different demographic particularly youngsters. We wondered if producing some short on message videos could help us. Action Point Chris Passmore can we discuss what you might be able to do with your video editing skills? A quick search on Tik Tok reveals there are literally hundreds of videos on there about repair cafes so we are missing a trick.

There may be others in our group who would like to take on producing some content for Tik Tok? Please get in touch if you are interested.

Repair Cafe Themes

If you use this **LINK** then you can see all of the proposed (and past) zones for this year. On the right there is a read more section where you can see who will be exhibiting in any particular month. April (Sport / Exercise theme) has been difficult to get organisations to commit as this is probably due to it being Easter. If you do know of anyone that may want to be involved then please get them to contact us. Scour your networks to see who you could ask.

Maidstone United are attending and there will be some physical activities! (soft balls for H&S)

May should be a busy one & includes the new electric refuse truck 'Binosauras' being brought into the hall itself! So some great visuals and good opportunities to get the message across about recycling.

The National Emergency Briefing

If you are unaware of this initiative then this will help
https://www.nebriefing.org/

Leading scientists & experts presented to MPs in the Autumn about the Climate Crisis! They are putting together a 45 minute film to be shown through local groups & networks. It will hopefully inspire, provoke, promote and instill

in people just how important our individual and collective actions are around the climate.

We should all push for our local MP to attend a local screening (we need to ensure they attend a screening in their constituency) and the more of us that suggest this to them, the more likely we are to get them along and in turn they can take matters forward to the government.

MCAN have hired 3 halls at Maidstone Community Support Centre, 39-48 Marsham St and we can get 140 people along so as ever we need your support to invite people to this screening. Booking will be free through Eventbrite & more details will be available soon, but make a note of the date in your diary for 18th May please. Final timings to be announced.
Following the film there will be group discussions to see what the main outcomes are and proposed local actions.

The film targets different elements of the community from sport to the WI to local businesses, so something for everyone.

The same message is for us all to engage with our networks and get as many people along as possible.

Website Changes

There were some issues with our credit card machine at the last Repair Cafe so a new Donations page has been added to the website. Follow the link or QR codes which will link the donor to their banking app on their phone (most people do have these apps) and donations can be made. Paper forms of the QR codes will also be available at the Repair Cafe in future.

Maidstone West Station

Vincent gave us a brief history and things are progressing well at the station with biodiversity being an over-riding aim in the planting.

We now have the grant money in our bank account for the 2 planters that we have had constructed. These are quality items and heavy so some help is required to transport them across the bridge at the station. A date has been set for this to happen 11th April from around 9 am and please contact us if you can lend your muscles on the day. In an ideal world we can summon up to about 10 people to help over a 3-4 hour period. All are welcome and a classic many hands make light work opportunity. Please help if you can.

Big Day Out

Following on from the success of last years BDO the 2026 date is Saturday 13th June. This is all about embracing and using the green spaces locally to us & in and around Maidstone. We have some beautiful green spaces and many events will be staged in them. Please make a note in your diaries and work hard to attend one of the events if you possible.

AOB

We now have on Facebook, a MCAN page and a MCAN group, as well as the Maidstone Repair Cafe group. Potentially some confusion has arisen, but being able to manage our own page (without the public posting on it) is a great benefit.
Also seeing the scheduled posts from other admins helps enormously as the posts are visible to each other as they are being created.
Please have a look & let us know what you think!

There are some remaining spaces on the Composting Workshop at Communigrow for Fri 20th and Sat 28th March. Please let us know if you are interested.

Neil mentioned he is working on a planting project at Crisbrook Meadow with the Valley Conservation Society. Pennies are funding it. They have enough volunteers to plant the wildflowers.